

## Press Release

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### **Maryland Heritage Area Grants to Boost Tourism throughout State**

#### *Close to 60 Projects Receive Funds from Maryland Historical Trust Heritage Program*

CROWNSVILLE, MD – From helping fund a War of 1812 education program for school children at Fort McHenry to supporting a new interpretive exhibit at one of the best-preserved slave cabins in the nation, a state heritage organization today awarded 58 matching grants totaling \$2,724,457 to Maryland nonprofit organizations, local jurisdictions and tourism groups. The grants by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) fund historic preservation, natural resource protection and educational programs in 12 state-designated Heritage Areas.

The grants, given for the last 16 years, produce economic spin-off effects in areas that contribute to Maryland's cultural heritage. By supporting capital projects and educational activities, the grants spawn renewed interest in Maryland culture from residents and visitors, boosting tourism-related jobs.

"Tourism is one of Maryland's largest industries. By investing in initiatives like the Maryland Heritage Area Program, our state's cultural heritage tourism continues to impact our economy by creating jobs, generating tax revenue and increasing business income," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "We're so proud to live in our great state, known as 'America in Miniature' since Maryland offers so much for visitors to enjoy."

Tourism represents the 10th largest private employment sector in Maryland, providing more than 131,600 jobs and about \$4.7 billion in wages and salaries. Visitors to Maryland spent over \$14.3 billion, generating nearly \$2 billion in state and local tax revenue across Maryland, in just one year.

Grants were awarded in Heritage Areas throughout the state. See [mht.maryland.gov](http://mht.maryland.gov) for the full list. Some of the diverse projects funded today include:

- The Living Classrooms Foundation and the Friends of Fort McHenry, in partnership with the National Park Service, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, were awarded \$25,500 for the "200 for the 200th" Bicentennial Education Program in the Baltimore Heritage Area. The program will bring 6,000 students to Fort McHenry by 2014 as part of the Bicentennial Commemoration of the War of 1812 to learn about the history of Fort McHenry, the national anthem and Maryland's role in the War of 1812.

- In the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, the Civil War Preservation Trust was awarded a \$90,000 grant to protect the Williamsport Battlefield in Washington County. The Battle of Williamsport took place July 6-16, 1863 when Robert E. Lee's army was retreating to Virginia after its defeat at Gettysburg with the Union Army in pursuit. The Trust will use Heritage Area grant funds to permanently protect key portions of the battlefield.
- In the Mountain Maryland, Gateway to the West Heritage Area, a grant of \$12,500 to Garrett County Trails, Inc. will help to build a trailhead at the Garrett County/Deep Creek Lake Visitor Center in McHenry. The trailhead connects to a network of trails in the Deep Creek area and will feature hiking and biking trail maps on large, all-weather panels mounted to the side of the visitor center as well as a gathering area of brick pavers, a bench and a bike rack.
- A grant of \$6,000 was awarded to Historic Sotterley, Inc. to develop and install interpretive exhibits at the Sotterley slave cabin, one of the best preserved original cabins in the mid-Atlantic region. Sotterley Plantation, a National Historic Landmark in St. Mary's County in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area, comprises more than 20 original buildings spanning its 300-year evolution. The circa-1830 cabin tells the history and story of Sotterley's enslaved, then emancipated people.

MHAA oversees a system of [12 locally administered, state-certified Heritage Areas](#) located in 21 counties and the city of Baltimore. Heritage Areas offer visitors compelling stories of the people, the land and the waters through historic buildings, archaeological sites, museums, parks, and natural landscapes, as well as food, music and art traditions.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) is a state agency dedicated to preserving and interpreting the legacy of Maryland's past. Through research, conservation and education, the Trust assists the people of Maryland in understanding their historical and cultural heritage. The Trust is a division of the Maryland Department of Planning and serves as Maryland's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

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